

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congressman John W. Olver (D-1st District) announced today that the fiscal year 2009 omnibus appropriations bill approved by Congress includes a little over \$1.4 million in federal assistance for various projects in Berkshire County.

Congressman Olver is a member of the Appropriations Committee and Chairman of the Transportation-HUD Appropriations Subcommittee and worked to include the funding in the omnibus spending legislation. The omnibus represents nine out of eleven annual appropriations bills pulled together into one package. The bill will fund most of the federal government's domestic activities in 2009.

The projects and their included dollar amounts are:

\$300,000 for Shakespeare and Company's Educational Programming to Assist At-Risk Students

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Shakespeare & Company has developed one of the most extensive theatre-in-education programs in the northeast, offering year-round innovative performances and workshops in and after school. This federal support will enable Shakespeare and Company to sustain and expand its full range of education programming, strengthening ties with the school and local communities and extending the reach of its highly successful education and professional development philosophy and methodology.

Congressman John Olver said, "Shakespeare and Company's programs provide numerous benefits for at-risk students. It is important that these young people have the opportunity to develop interests, have an outlet for expressing themselves and the ability to become part of a community. Shakespeare and Company provides these opportunities to many students throughout the Berkshires."

For additional information, please contact:

Kevin Coleman, Director of Education, 413-637-1199,
kevincoleman@shakespeare.org

\$285,000 for Berkshire Museum Renovations & Enhancements

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This funding will be used to update, renovate, and enhance the Berkshire Museum's 104-year old facility. This will enable the Berkshire Museum to protect and preserve its arts and artifacts valued at \$200 million, better serve its visitors with upgraded and accessible amenities, and world-class exhibitions to drive visitations and increase tourism to downtown Pittsfield and Berkshire County. It will also enable the Museum to enhance its educational programming and outreach using new and exciting exhibitions that it will host or create from its own collection.

"The arts are a critical component of the economy, and character, of the Berkshires," said Congressman John Olver. "These funds will help the museum make much needed renovations. In fact, the primary focus of the work will be to make the facility ADA compliant. This will ensure that the museum meets accessibility requirements mandated by law, and that all who want to experience the museum will be able to."

For additional information, please contact:

Kim Rawson 413-443-7171 x28,
krawson@berkshiremuseum.org

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\$570,000 for a new Community Health Center in Great Barrington

This funding will contribute towards Community Health Programs, Inc. (CHP)

building a 24,000 square foot community health center. CHP currently has its services divided among several locations. The new facility will be a 24,000 building, accommodating all of CHP's programs under one roof.

"We cannot underestimate impact of consolidating primary care, mental health care, oral health, ob/gyn and social services under one roof," Congressman John Olver said. "CHP provides a medical safety net for 6,000 of the most vulnerable residents of South Berkshire County. Fragmentation of services creates yet another barrier to receiving care for this population."

For additional information, please contact:

Marcia Savage, CEO,
413-528-9311 x2115.

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\$78,600 for Berkshire Enterprise's Entrepreneurial Training Program for Displaced Workers

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Berkshire Enterprise will use these funds to provide entrepreneurial training to dislocated workers so they can start their own businesses and create jobs for themselves and others. The training involves 10 weeks of intensive classes teaching business skills, followed by 10 weeks of implementation meetings.

"In these difficult economic times, we have got to get creative. When jobs do not exist out there, we have got to create them. Berkshire Enterprise's program does just that," Congressman John Olver said. "It is an impressive program with an impressive success rate – over 85 percent of business started by Berkshire Enterprise graduates are still in business after five years."

For additional information, please contact:

Steven Fogel, Program Director, 413-441-3688.

\$95,000 for MCLA's Regional Science & Technology Resource Center

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This funding will contribute towards MCLA's establishment of a regional science resource center to support economic development and innovation in the sciences. The center will support K-12 science education by maintaining a collection of science materials (books, digital media, online resources, equipment, and science experiment kits), providing these materials to educators on a lending basis, and convening learning experiences. The project will also provide resources and professional development opportunities for educators.

"In these difficult economic times, school budgets are being cut left and right. Unfortunately, this has left many schools without the resources necessary to run labs and provide hands-on learning experiences. As a scientist myself, I can say that these experiences are necessary to draw students to the sciences," Congressman John Olver said. "The sciences are where the jobs of the future will be. It's important for students know that a career in the sciences is an option for them."

For additional information, please contact:□

Denise Richardello, Vice President of Enrollment and External Relations at MCLA,
413-662-5203,

drichard@mcla.edu

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\$71,300 for Berkshire Community College's SIMS Project

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The funding will be used to expand the simulated instructional mannequin system (SIMS) within the community college system along the Northern Tier, allowing for all areas of healthcare to utilize SIMS as a training tool. Participating colleges will include MWCC, Greenfield Community College and Berkshire Community College. The total funding for the project is \$214,000. Each institution will receive one third of the total funding.

"These 'virtual hospitals' provide excellent training opportunities for faculty and students as well as regional health care employers, physicians, incumbent nurses, and health care professionals," Congressman John Olver said. "In these difficult economic times, it is necessary to provide resources to our local community colleges to retrain those who have recently become unemployed."

For additional information, please contact: □

Dr. John Paskus, 413-499-4660,

jpaskus@berkshirecc.edu

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